

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 02302 152037Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 370

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SNAR, HO

SUBJ: JUDGE SUSPECTED OF BRIBERY APPOINTED TO NEW JOB

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1587

1. JESUS LEZ ORELLANA, WHOSE REMOVAL AS JUDGE OF TEGUCIGALPA'S FIRST CRIMINAL COURT FOR LEGAL ERRORS LED TO WIDESPREAD SUSPICION THAT HE HAD IN FACT ACCEPTED A BRIBE TO RELEASE ACCUSED DRUG TRAFFICKERS MENTIONED IN REFTTEL, HAS BEEN APPOINTED DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE INTEGRITY. THE OFFICE REPORTS TO THE CONTROLLER GENERAL AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENFORCEMENT OF THE "LAW AGAINST ILLICIT ENRICHMENT BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS."

2. THE IRONY OF THIS APPOINTMENT HAS NOT BEEN LOST ON PRESS OR PUBLIC AND EVEN LED TO RUMORS THAT THE SUPREME COURT, WHICH FIRED ORELLANA, HAD CONSIDERED RESIGNING IN A BODY. REFORMIST 'TIEMPO' EDITORIALIZED THAT "EX-JUDGE ORELLANA, WHOSE HONESTY HAS BEEN QUESTIONED BY THE SUPREME COURT, NOW BECOMES THE OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF WATCHING OVER THE HONESTY OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES," AND CLEARLY BLAMED THE ARMED FORCES FOR PERMITTING THIS.

3. COMMENT: ONE SENIOR SUPREME COURT OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT
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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 02302 152037Z

UNNAMED MILITARY OFFICERS HAD PLACED GREAT PRESSURE ON SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT, FRANCISCO SALOMON JIMINEZ, NOT TO REMOVE ORELLANA FROM CRIMINAL COURT. ELOMON'S REPLY WAS THAT "I'M IN CHARGE OF THE COURTS, NOT YOU." HE IS NOT, HOWEVER, IN CHARGE OF THE CONTROLLER GENERAL'S OFFICE. ORELLANA'S APPOINTMENT WILL ONLY

CONFIRM SPECULATION THAT HE HAS BEEN APPOINTED BY THE ARMED

FORCES BECAUSE OF PREVIOUS SPECIAL TREATMENT GIVEN MILITARY OFFICERS IN CASES BEFORE HIS COURT. IT HAS ALSO ADDED TO THE GENERAL AWARENESS OF NEED FOR REFORM PROVOKED BY THE ONGOING NARCOTICS SCANDAL, BUT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE REVERSED BY PUBLIC PRESSURE.
BARTCH

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NNN

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